

A
Notable Discouery of Coosenage.
*Now daily practised by sundry lewd per-
sons, called Connie-catchers, and
Crosse-byters.*

Plainely laying open those pernicious sleights that hath brought many igno-
rant men to confusion.

*Written for the general benefit of all Gentlemen, Citizens, Apprentises, Countrey Farmers
and yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of such coosening companions.*

With a delightfull discourse of the coosenage of Colliers.

Nascimur pro patria. By R. Greene, Maister of Arts.



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TO THE YONG GEN-
tlemen, Marchants, Apprentises,
Farmers, and plain Countrey-men
Health.



Diogenes, Gentlemen, from a counterfeit Coi-
ner of money, became a currant corrector of
manners, as absolute in the one, as dissolute
in the other: time refineth mens affects, and
their humors grow different by the distincti-
on of age. Poore Ouid that amorously writ in
his youth the art of loue, complained in his exile amongst the
Getes of his wanton follies. And Socrates age was vertuous thogh
his prime was licentious. So, Gentlemen, my younger yeares had
uncertaine thoughtes, but now my ripe dayes cals on to repen-
tant deeds, and I sorrow as much to see others wilfull, as I deligh-
ted once to be wanton. The odde mad-caps I haue beene mate too,
not as a companion, but as a spie to haue an insight into their
knaueries, that seeing their traines I might eschew their snares:
those mad fellowes I learned at last to loath, by their owne grace-
lesse villeinies, and what I saw in them to their confusion, I can
forewarn in others to my countries commodity. None could de-
cipher Tyranisme better then Arestippus, not that his nature
was cruell, but that he was nourtured with Dionisius: The sim-
ple swaine that cuts the Lapidaries stones, can distinguish a Ruby
from a Diamond onely by his labour: though I haue not practised
their deceits, yet conuersing by fortune, and talking vppon pur-
pose with such copes-mates, hath giuen me light into their con-
ceiptes, and I can decipher their qualities, though I vtterly mislike

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of their practises. To be briefe Gentlemen, I haue seen the world and rounded it, though not with trauell, yet with experience, and I cry out with Salomon. Omnia sub sole vanitas. I haue smiled with the Italian, and worne the vipers head in my hand, and yet stopt his venome. I haue eaten Spanishe Mirabolanes, and yet am nothing the more metamorphosed. Fraunce, Germany, Poland, Denmarke, I knowe them all, yet not affected to any in the fourme of my life; onely I am English borne, and I haue English thoughts, not a diuell incarnate because I am Italianat, but hating the pride of Italy, because I know their peeuishnes: yet in all these Countries where I haue trauailed, I haue not seene more excesse of vanity then wee Englishe men practise through vain glory: for as our wits be as ripe as any, so our willes are more ready then they all, to put in effect any of their licencious abuses: yet amongst the rest, letting ordinary sinnes passe, because custome hath almost made them a lawe, I will only speake of two such notable abuses, which the practitioners of the shadow with the name of Arts, as neuer haue beene heard of in any age before. The first and chiefe, is called the Art of Cunny catching; the second, the Arte of Crosbiting; two such pestilent and preiudiciall practises, as of late haue beene the ruine of infinit persons, and the subuersion and ouerthrow of many Marchaunts, Farmers, and honest minded yeomen. The first is a deccite at Cardes, which growing by enormity into a Coosenage, is able to drawe (by the subtile shew thereof) a man of great iudgement to consent to his owne confusion. Yet Gentlemen when you shall reade this booke written faithfully to discouer these coosening practises, thinke I go not about to disproue or disalow the moste auncient and honest pastime or recreation of Card-play, for thus much I know by reading: When the Cittie of Thebes was besieged by them of Lacedemonia, being girt within strong fenced walles, and hauing men enough, and able to rebat the enemye, they found no inconuenience of force to breede their ensuing bane but famine, in that
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when victuals waxed scant, hunger would make them eyther yeeld by a fainting composition, or a miserable death. Whereupon to wearie the foe with wintering at the sledge, the Thebanes deuised this pollicie, they found out the Methode of Cards and Dice, and so busied their braines with the pleasantnesse of that new inuention, passing away the time with strange recreations and pastimes, beguiling hunger with the delight of the new sportes, and eating but euerie third day, and playing two, so their frugall sparing of victuals, kept them from famine, the Citie from sacking, and raised the foe from a mortall sledge. Thus was the vse of Cardes and Dice first inuented, and since amongst Princes highly esteemed and allowed in all common-wealthes, as a necessarie recreation for the minde: but as time and malice of mans nature hatcheth abuse, so good thinges by ill wittes are wrested to the worse, and so in Cardes: for from an honest recreation, it is growne to a preiudiciall practise, and most high degree of coosenage, as shall be discovered in my Arte of Cunny-catching, for not onely simple swaines whose wittes is in their handes, but yoong Gentlemen and Marchants, are all caught like Cunnies in the hay, and so led like lambes to their confusion.

The poore man that commeth to the Tearme to trie his right, and laieth his land to morgadge to get some Crownes in hys purse to see his Lawyer, is drawne in by these deuilish Cunny-catchers that at one cut at Cardes loofeth all his money, by which meanes, he, his wife and children, is brought to vtter ruine and misery. The poore Prentice whose honest minde aymeth onely at his Maisters profites, by these pestilent vipers of the common-wealth, is smoothly intised to the hazard of this game at Cardes, and robd of his Maisters money, which forceth him oft times eyther to run away, or banckrout all, to the ouerthrow of some honest and wealthy Cittizen. Seeing then such a daungerous enormity groweth by them to the discredit of the estate of England, I would wishe the Iustices appointed as seuerer Censors of such fatall mischiefes,

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chiefes, to shewe themselves patres patriæ, by weeding out such worms as eat away the sappe of the Tree, and rooting this base degree of Cooseners out of so peaceable and prosperous a countrey, for of al diuclish practises this is the most preiudicial. The high Lawyer that challengeth a purse by the high way side, the foist, the nip, the stale, the snap, I meane the picke-pockets and cut-purses are nothing so daungerous to meete with all, as these Coosening Cunny-catchers. The Chetors that with their false Dice make a hand, & strike in at Hazard or Passage with their Dice of aduantage, are nothing so daungerous as these base minded Caterpillers. For they haue their vies and there reuies vppon the poore Cunnies backe, til they so ferrette beate him that they leaue him neither haire on his skin, nor hole to harbour in. There was before this many yeares ago, a practise put in vse by such shifting companions, which was called the Barnards law, wherein as in the Art of Cunny-catching, four persons were required to performe their coosning commodity. The Taker vp, the Verser, the Barnard and the Rutter, and the manner of it in deed was thus. The Taker vp seemeth a skilful man in al things, who hath by long trauail learned without Booke a thousand pollicies to insinuate himselfe into a mans acquaintance: Talke of matters in law, he hath plenty of Casis at his fingers ends, and he hath scene, and tried, and ruled in the Kinges Courts: Speake of grasing and husbandry, no man knoweth more shires then hee, nor better which way to raise a gainefull commodity, and how the abuses and ouerture of prices might bee redressed. Finally, enter into what discourse they list, were it into a Broomemans faculty, hee knoweth what gaynes they haue for olde Bootes and Shooes: Yea, and it shall scape him hardly, but that ere your talke break off, hee will be your Countrey man at least, and peraduenture eyther of kinne, aly, or some stale sib to you, if your reach far surmount not his. In case hee bring to passe that you bee glad of his acquaintance, then doth hee carry you to the Taucrnes, and with him goes the Verser a man

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of more worshippe then the Taker vp, and hee hath the countenance of a landed man. As they are set, comes in the Barnard stombling into your company, like some aged Farmer of the Countrey, a stranger vnto you all, that had beene at some market Towne there abouts buying and selling, and there tipleed so much Malmesie that hee had neuer a ready word in his mouth, and is so carelesse of his money, that out hee throweth some forty Angels on the boords end, and standing somewhat aloofe, calleth for a pint of wine, and sayth: Maisters, I am somewhat bolde with you, I pray you be not greued if I drinke my drinke by you: and thus ministers such idle drunken talke, that the Verser who counterfeiteth the landed man comes and drawes more neare to the plaine honest dealing man, and prayeth him to call the Barnard more neare to laugh at his folly. Betweene them two the matter shal be so workemanly conueied and finely argued, that out cometh an old paire of Cardes, whereat the Barnard teacheth the Verser a new game, that hee saies cost him for the learning two pots of Ale not two houres agoe, the first wager is drinke, the next two pence or a groat, and lastly to be brieft they vse the matter so, that hee that were a hundred yeare olde, and neuer played in his life for a peny, cannot refuse to be the Versers halfe, and consequently at one game at Cardes, hee looseth al they play for bee it a hundred pound. And if perhaps when the money is lost (to vse their word of Arte) the poore countrey man begin to smoake them, and sweares the drunken knaue shall not get his money so, then standeth the Rutter at the doore and draweth his sword and picketh a quarrell at his owne shadowe, if hee lacke an Osler or a Tapster or some other to brabble with, that while the streete and company gather to the fray, as the manner is, the Barnard steales away with all the coine, and gets him to one blinde Taverne or other, where these Cooseners had appointed to meete.

Thus Gentlemen I haue glaunst at the Barnardes Lawe, which though you may perceyue it to bee a preiudiciall insinuating

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ting coosenage, yet is the Art of Cunny-catching so farre beyond it in subtilty, as the diuel is more dishonest then the holiest Angell: for so unlikely is it for the poore Cunny to leese, that might he pawn his stake to a pound, he would lay it that he cannot be cros-bitten in the cut at Cardes, as you shall perceiue by my present discovery. Yet gentlemen, am I sore threatned by the hacksters of that filthy faculty, that if I sette their practises in Print, they will cut off that hand that writes the Pamphlet, but howe I feare their brauadoes, you shall perceiue by my plaine painting out of them, yea, so little doe I esteem such base minded braggards, that were it not I hope of their amendement, I would in a schedule set down the names of such coosening Cunny-catchers. Well leauing them and there course of life to the honourable and the worshipfull of the land to be censors of with Iustice, haue about for a blowe at the Arte of Cros-biting: I meane not cros-biters at dice, when the Chetor with a langret, cut contrarie to the vantage, wil cros-bite a bard cater tray: nor I meane not when a broking knaue cros-bites a Gentleman with a bad commoditie: nor when the Foist, the picke-pockets (sir reuerence I meane) is cros-bitten by the Snap, and so smoakt for his purchase: nor when the nip, which the common people call a Cut-purse, hath a cros-bite by some bribing officer, who threatning to carrie him to prison, takes awaie all the monie and lets him slip without anie punishment: But I meane a more dishonourable Art, when a base roague, eyther keepeth a whore as his friend, or marries one to be his maintainer, and with her not onely cros-bites men of good calling; but especially poore ignorant countrey Farmers, who God wotte be by them led like sheepe to the slaughter. Thus gentle readers, haue I giuen you a light in briefe, what I meane to prosecute at large, and so with an humble sute to all Iustices, that they will seeke to roote out these two rogish Artes, I commit you to the Almighty.

Yours Rob. Greene.

THE ART OF CON- ny-catching.



Here bee requisite effectually to ad the
Art of Conny-catching thre severall
parties: the Setter, the Werfer, and
the Warrackle. The nature of the set-
ter is to draw in any person familiare
ly to drinke with him, which person
they call the Conie, and their methode
is according to the man they aime at:
if a Gentleman, Merchant, or Apprentice, the Connie is the
more easely caught, in that they are sone induced to play,
and therfore I omit the circumstance they vse in catching of
them. And so because the poore Country Farmer, or Shep-
man is the marke they most shoot at, who they know comes
not

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not emptie to the Terme, I will discover the meanes they put in practise to bring in some honest, simple, and ignorant men to their purpose. The Conny-catchers, apparelled like honest ciuill Gentlemen, or good fellows, with a smooth face, as if butter would not melt in their mouthes, after dinner when the Clients are come from Westminster hal, and are somewhat at leisure to walke vp and downe Paules, Fleet-Street, Holburne, the Strand, and such common haunted places, where these cosening companions attend onely to spie out a pray: who, as soon as they see a plaine country fellowe wel and cleanly apparelled, either in a coate of home spunne russet, or of frize as the time requires, and a side pouch at his side, there is a Connie saith one. At that worde out flies the Setter, and ouer-taking the man, begins to salute him thus. Sir, God saue you, you are hartly welcom to London, how doth all our good frends in the country? I hope they bee all in health. The country-man seeing a man so courteous: that hee knowes not, halfe in a browne studie at this strange salutation, perhaps makes him this answer: Sir, all our frends in the cuntry are well thanks be to God, but truly I know you not, you must pardon mee. Why sir, saith the Setter, getting by his tong what cuntryman he is, are you not a Northshire man, or such a cuntryman? if he say yes, then he creeps vpon him cloiely; if hee say no, then straight the Setter comes ouer him thus: In good sooth sir, I know you by your face, and haue bene in your companie besore, I pray you (if without offence) let me craue your name, and the place of your abode. The simple man straight telles him where hee dwells, his name, and who be his next neighbors, and what Gentlemen dwell about him. After hee hath learned all of him, then hee comes ouer his fallowes kindly: Sir, though I haue bene somewhat bold to bee inquisitiue of your name: yet hold mee excused, for I took you for a friend of mine; but since by mistaking I haue made you slacke your busines, wele drinke a quart of wine, or a pot of Ale together: If the gentle soule bee so readie as to goe, then the Connie is caught; but if hee

smacks

smack the Better, and smells a Rat by his clawing, and will not drinke with him, then away goes the Better, & discourseth to the Werser the name of the man, the parish he dwells in, and what Gentlemen are his neare neighbours, with that away goes hee, and crossing the man, at some turning mætes him full in the face, and grætes him thus.

What goodman Barton? how fares all our friends about you? you are wel met, I haue a pint of wine for you, you are welcome to Towne. The plaine country-man hearing himselfe named by a man he knowes not, marvels and answers him that he knowes him not, and craues pardon: Not mee goodman Barton? haue you forgot mee? Why I am such a mans kinsman your neighbour not farre off: how doth this or that good Gentleman my friend? good Lorde that I should bee out of your remembrance, I haue bene at your house diuers times. Indeed sir, saith the farmer, are you such a mans kinsman? Surely sir, if you had not challenge acquaintance of me, I should neuer haue knowne you, I haue clean forgot you, but I know the good Gentleman your Cousen well, hee is my very good neighbour: and for his sake saith the Werser, wele drinke afoze we part: happely the man thanks him, & to the wine or ale they go, then ere they part they make him a Cony, and so ferret-claw him at cards, that they leaue him as bare of mony, as an ape of a taile. Thus haue these filthie fellows their subtil fetches to draw on poore men to fall into their coozening practises: thus like consuming mothes of the common-wealth, they pray vpon the ignorance of suche plaine soules, as measure all by their owne honestie: not regarding either conscience, or the fatall reuenge that is threatened for such idle and licentious persons: but doe imploy all their wits to ouerthrow of such, as with their handy thirst satisfie their hartie thirst: they preferring coozenage before labour, and chusing an idle practise before any honest forme of good liuing. Wel to the methode againe of taking vp their Connies: If the poore cuntry-man linoake them still, and will not stoupe vnto either of their lures: then one, either

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the Therser, or the Setter, or some of their crue (for there is a generall fraternitie betwixt them) steppeth before the Connie as he goeth, and letteth droppe twelue pence in the high way, that of force the Connie must see it. The Country-man spyng the shilling, maketh not daintie (for *Quis mihi mentis inops oblatum respuit aurum?*) but stoopeth very mannerly, & taketh it vp: then one of the Conny-catchers behind cryeth halfe part and so chalengeth halfe of the finding. The country-man content offereth to chaunge the money: Nay saith friend, saith the Therser, tis ill lucke to keepe found money, wele goe spend it in a pottle of wine, or in a breakfast, dinner or supper, as the time of the day requirer: If the Connie say he wil not, then answers the Therser, spend my part: If still the Connie refuse, he taketh halfe and away: If they spie the country-man to be of a hauing and courteous humour, then haue they a further policie to draw him on: an other that knoweth the place of his abode, maketh him, and sayth; Sir, well met, I haue runne hastily to overtake you I pray you dwell you not in Darby-shire in such a village? yes marie do I friend, saith the Connie: then replies the Therser, truly he sir, I haue a sute vnto you, I am going out of towne, and must sende a letter to the parson of your parish, you shall not refuse to do a stranger such a fauour as to carry it him, happen as men may in time meete, it may lie in my lot to see you as good a turne, & sir for your paines I will giue you twelue pence. The poore Conny in mere simplicitie saith, sir, I will do so much for you with all my heart, where is your letter? I haue it not (good sir) readie written, but may I intreate you to stepe into some Tauerne, or Ale-house, wele drinke the while, and I will write but a line or two: at this the Connie stoupes, and for greedines of the money, and vpon kinde curtesie goes with the Setter vnto the Tauerne. As they walke they meet the Therser, and then they all three goe into the Tauerne together.

See Gentlemen, what great Logitians these Conny-catchers bee, that haue such rhetorickall perswasions to induce the

the pooze country-man to his confusion, and what varietie of villanie they haue to strippe the honest farmer of his money. Well, imagine the Connie is in the Tauerne, then sits downe the Werler, and saith to the Setter; What sirha, wilt thou giue mee a quart of wine, or shall I giue thee one? wele drink a pint, saith the Setter, but wele play a game at cards for it, respecting moze the sport then the losse: content (saith the Werler) go call for a paire: and while he is gone to fetch the, he saith to the Cony, you shall see me fetch ouer my young maister for a quart of wine finely, but this you must doe for me: when I cut the Cardes, as I wil not cut aboue five off, marke then of all the great packe which is vndermost, and when I bid you call a card for mee, name that, and you shall see wele make him pay for a quart of wine straight. Cruely saith the Conny, I am no great player at Cardes, and I doe not wel vnderstand your meaning. Why saith he, it is thus: I will play at mum-chaunce, or decoy, that hee shall shuffle the Cardes, and I will cutte: now eyther of vs must call a Card, you shall call for mee, and hee for himselfe, and whose Card comes first wins: therfore when I haue cut the cards, then marke the nethermost of the greatest heape, that I set vpon the cards which I cut off, and alwaies cal that for me. Oh now saith the Connie, I vnderstand you, let me alone, I warrant I le sit your turne: with that, in comes the Setter with his Cardes, and asketh at what game they shall play, why saith the Werler, at a newe game called mum-chaunce, that hath no policie nor knauey, but p'aine as a pike staffe, you shall shuffle, and I le cut, you shall call a Card, and this honest man a straunger almost to vs both, shall call another for me, and which of our cards comes first shall win. Content saith the Setter, for tha's but mere hazard, and so he shuffles the cards, and the Werler cuts off some foure cards, and then taking vp the heape to set vpon them, giueth the Connie a glaunce of the bottom card of that heape, then saith, & now sir call for mee. The Conie to blind the Setters eyes, asketh as though he were not made priue to the game, what shall I

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cut? what card saith the Werler? why, what you will, either hart, spade, club, or diamond, coat-card, or other. Oh is it so saith the Connie: why then you shal haue the foure of harts, which was the card he had the glance of, and saith the Setter (holding the cardes in his hand, and turning vp the vppermost card as thogh he knew not wel the game) He haue the knaue of trumpe. Nay saith the Werler, there is no trump, you may call what card you will, then saith hee, He haue the ten of spades, with that he drawes, and the foure of harts comes first: well saith the Setter, tis but hazard, mine might haue come as wel as yours, siue is vp, I feare not the set: so they shuffle and cut, but the Werler winnes. Well saith the Setter, no butter will cleave on my bread, what not one draught amongst siue: Drawer a freshe pint, He haue another bout with you: but sir, I beleue (saith he to the Conny) you see some card, that it goes so crosse on my side: I saith the Connie, nay I hope you thinke not so of me, tis but hazard and chance: for I am but a meere stranger vnto the game, as I am an honest man I neuer saw it before.

Thus this simple Connie closeth vp smoothly to take the Werlers part, onely for greedinesse to haue him win the wine: Well, answeres the Setter, then He haue one cast more, and so it they go, but he looeth all, and beginneth to chafe in this manner: Were it not quoth he, that I care not for a quart of Wine, I could sweare as many othes for anger, as there be hairens on my head: why shoulde not my lucke be as good as yours, and fortune fauour me as well as you? what, not one cald card in tenne cuttes? He for sweare the game for euer. What, chafe not man (saith the Werler) seeing we haue your quart of Wine, He shew you the game, and with that discourseth al to him, as if he knew it not. The Setter, as simply as if the knaue were ignorant, saith: I marrie, I thinke so, you must needes winne, when he knowes what card to call, I might haue plaid long enough before I had got a set. Truly saith the Connie, tis a pretie game, for tis not possible for a man to lose that cuts the
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the cardes: I warrant the other that shuffles may loose Saint Peters coape if hee had it. Well, Ile carie this home with mee into the country, and win many a pot of ale with it. A fresh pint saith the Werler, and then wele away: but seeing sir you are going homeward, Ile learne you a trick worth the noting, that you shall win manie a pot with in the winter nights: with that he culls out the foure knaves, and prickes one in the toppe, one in the middest, and one in the bottome. Now sir saith hee, you see these thre knaves apparantly, thrust them downe with your hand, and cutte where you will, and though they bee so far asunder, Ile make them all come together. I pray you lets see that trick saith the Connie, mee thinkes it should be impossible. So the Werler drawes, & all the thre knaves come in one heap: this he doth once or twice, that the Connie wonders at it, and offers him a pint of wine to teache it him. Nay saith the Werler, Ile do it so; thanks, & therfore marke me where you have taken out the four knaves, lay two together above, & draw up one of them that it may be seene, then prick the other in the middest, & the third in the bottom, so when any cuts, cut he neuer so warily, thre knaves must of force come together: for the bottome knave is cut to by upon both the upper knaves. I marry saith the Setter, but then the thre knaves you shew comes not together. Truth saith the Werler, but one among a thousand marks not that: it requires a quicke eie, a sharpe wit, and a reaching head to spie at the first. Now gramercy sir for this trick saith the Connie, Ile dominere with this amongst my neighbors. Thus doth the Werler & the Setter feigne a kind frendship to the Cony, offering him no shew of cosenage, nor once to drawe him in for a pint of wine, the more to shadow their intended velleiny, but now begins the sport: as thus they sit tipling, comes the Barnackle & thrusts open the dore, looking into the roome where they are, and as one bashfull steps backe again: and very mannerly saith: I cry you mercy Gentlemen, I thought a frend of mine had bin here, I pray you pardon my boldnesse. No harme sir saith

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the Uerſer, I pray you drinke a cuppe of wine wiſh vs and welcom: ſo in comes the Barnackle, & taking the cup drinks to the Connie, & then ſaith, what at cards Gentlemen? were it not I ſhould bee offenſiue to the company, I would play for a pint till my friend come that I looke for. Why ſir, ſaith the Uerſer, if you will ſit downe you ſhall bee taken vp for a quart of wine. With all my hart, ſaith the Barnackle, what will you play at? at Primero, Primo viſto, Saunt, one and thirtie, new cut, or what ſhall bee the game? Sir ſaith the Uerſer, I am but an ignorant man at cards, and I ſee you haue them at your fingers end, I le play with you at a game wherein can be no deccit, it is called mum-chance at cards, and it is thus: you ſhall ſhuffle the cards, and I wil cut, you ſhall call one, and this plaine honeſt country yecoman ſhall call a card for mee, and which of our cardes comes firſt ſhall winne: heere you ſee is no deceite, and at this I le play. No truly ſaith the Connie, me thinks there can be no great craft in this: well ſaith the Barnackle, for a pint of wine haue at you: ſo they play as befoze, five vp, and the Uerſer winnes. This is hard luck, ſaith the Barnackle, and I beleue the honeſt man ſpies ſome card in the botto me, and therefore I le make this alwaies to picke the bottom card. content ſaith the Uerſer, and the Connie to cloke the matter ſaith ſir. you offer me iniurie to thinke that I can ſee a card, when I neyther touch them, ſhuffle, cut, nor draw them: Ah ſir ſaith the Barnackle, giue loſers leaue to ſpeake: well ſaith they got againe, and then the Barnackle knowing the game better then they all, by chopping a card winnes two of the five, but lets the Uerſer win the ſet, then in a chaſe hee ſwear eth tis but his ill lucke, and he can ſee no deceit at it, and therefore he wil play twelue pence a cut. The Uerſer is content, & wins two or three ſhillings of the Barnackle, whereat hee chaſes, and ſaith, I came hither in an evil houre: but I will winne my money againe, or loſe all in my purſe, With that hee draws out a purſe with ſome three or foure pound, and claps it on the bozd: the Uerſer asketh the Connie ſecretly by ſigns

if hee will be his halfe, he sales I, and straight fees for his purse: well the Barnacle shuffles the Cardes thoroughly, and the Werser cuts as befoze, the Barnacle whē he hath drawn one Carde saith, ile eyther winne something or lose something, therefore ile vie and reue enery Card at my pleasure, till eyther yours or mine come out, and therefore twelue pence vpon this Card, my Card comes first for twelue pence: no saith the Werser, I sayth the Conny, and I durst holde twelue pence moze, why, I holde you saith the Barnacle, and so they vie and reue till some tenne shillings bee on the stake: and then next comes forth the Wersers Carde, that the Conny called, and so the Barnacle looseth: well, this fletheth the Conny, the sweetnesse of gaine maketh him frolicke, and no man is moze ready to vie and reue than hee. Thus for three or foure times the Barnacle looseth, at last to whet on the Conny, he striketh his chopt Card and winneth a good stake. A way with the witch cries the Barnacle, I hope the Cardes will turne at last. I much, thinketh the Conny, twas but a chaunce that you askt so right, to aske one of the five that was cutte off, I am sure there was forty to one on my side, and ile haue you on the lurch by and by, so still they vie and reue, and for once that the Barnacle winnes, the Conny gets five, at last when they mean to haue the Conny cleane of all his coine, the Barnacle chafeth, and vpon a pawne borroweth some money of the Tapster, and sweares hee will vie it to the vttermost, then thus he chops his Card to crosbite the Conny, hee first looks on the bottome Card, and shuffles often, but still keeping that bottome Card, which hee knowes to bee vppermost, then sets he downe the Cards, and the Werser to encourage the Conny, cuts off but three Cards, wherof the Barnacles Card must needes bee the vppermost, then shewes he the bottome Card of the other heape cut off to the Conny, and sets it vpon the Barnacles Card which he knowes, so that of force, the Card that was layd vppermost, must come forth first: and then the Barnacle calles that Card: they drawe a Card, and then the

C.

Bar.

The Art of Conny-catching.

Barnackle vies, and the Countrey man vies vppon him : for this is the Law, as often as one vies or reuies the other must see it or els hee loseth the stake : Well at last the Barnackle plyes it so, that perppasses hee vies more money then the Conny hath in hys purse : The Conny vpon this, knowing hys Card is the third or fourth Card, and that hee hath so; tie to one against the Barnackle, pawns his rings if he hath any, hys sword, his cloake, or els what hee hath about him, to maintaine the vie, and when hee laughes in his secue thinking he hath fleest the Barnackle of all, then the Barnackles Card comes forth, and strikes such a cold humo: to hys heart, that hee sittes as a man in a fraunce, not knowing what to doe, and sighing while his heart is ready to breake, thinking on the money that he hath lost. Perhaps the man is very simple and patient, and whatsoeuer he thinks, for feare goes his way quiet with his losse, while the Conny-catchers laugh and deuide the spoyle, and beeing out of doores, poore man, goeth to hys lodging with a heauie heart & watry eyes, pensue & sorrowfull, but too late, for perhaps the mans state did depend on that money, and so hee, his wife, hys children, and hys family are brought to extreame misery. An other perhaps more hardy and subtile, smoakes the Conny-catchers and smelleth coosenage, & sayes, they shal not haue his money so, but they aunswer him with braues, and though hee bring them befoze an Officer, yet the knaues are so fauoured, that the man neuer recouers his money, and yet he is let slip without punishment. Thus are the poore Connies robbed by these base minded Caterpillers : Thus are seruing-men oft inticed to play and loose all : Thus are prentices induced to be Connies, and so are coosened of their Maisters money, yea young Gentlemen, Merchants and others, are fetcht in by these damnable rake-helles, a plague as ill as hell, which is present losse of money and ensuing misery. A lamentable case in England, when such vipers are suffered to breede, and are not cut off with the sword of Justice. This enormitie is not onely in London, but nowe generally dispersed through all
England

England in euery Shyre Cittie and Towne of any receipt, & many complaints are hearde of their egregious coosenage: The pooze Farmer simply going about his businesse, or to his Attourneys chamber, is caught by & coosned of all: The Seruing-man sent with his Lozdes treasure, looeth oft times most part, to these woorms of the common wealth. The Apprentice hauing his Maisters money in charge, is spoiled by them, and from an honest seruaunt eyther driuen to run away, or to liue in discredite for euer. The Gentleman looeth his land, the Merchant his stocke, and all to these abhominable Conny-catchers, whose meanes is as ill as they lyuing, for they are all eyther wedded to Whores, or so addicted to Whores, that what they get from honest men, they spend in bawdy houses amongst Harlots, and consume it as vainely as they get it villainously. They care are of Adamant, as pittilesse as they are trecherous, for be the man neuer so pooze, they will not returne him one penny of his losse. I remember a merry iest done of late to a Welch-man, who being a mere stranger in London, and not well acquainted with the English tongue, yet chaunst amongst certayne Conny-catchers, who spying the Gentleman to haue money, they so dealt wyth hym, that what by signes and broken English, they got him in for a Conny, and fleest him of euery penny that he had, and of his sword. At last the man smoakt them, and drew his dagger vpon them at Ludgate, for there abouts they had catcht him, and would haue stabde one of them for his money, people came and stopt hym, and the rather because they coulde not vnderstande him, although he had a Card in one hand, and his dagger in the other, and sayd as well as he coulde, a Carde a Carde Mon dieu, in the meane whyle the Conny-catchers were gotten in to Danles, and so away: The Welch man followed them, & sought them there, and went by and downe the Church stil with his naked dagger and the Card in his hande, & the Gentlemen meruailed what he meant thereby: at last one of his countrey men met him, and enquired the cause of his choller, & then he tolde

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him howe hee was coosoned at Cardes and robbed of all hys money, but as hys losse was voluntary, so his seeking them was mere vanity, for they were stept into some blinde Alehouse to deuide the shares. Neere to Sainct Edmundes Bury in Suffolke, there dwelt an honest man a Shoemaker, that hauing some twenty Markes in his purse long gathered and neerely kept, came to the Market to buy a Dicker of hydes, and by chaunce fell amongst Conny-catchers: whose names I omitte, because I hope of theyr amendement. Thys plaine countrey man, drawn in by these former deuises, was made a Conny, and so straight stript of all his twenty marke to his vtter vndoing: the knaues scapt, and hee went home a sorrowfull man: shortly after one of these Conny-catchers was taken for a suspected person, and layde in Bury Gaole, the Sessions comming, and hee produced to the Bar, it was the fortune of thys poore Shoemaker to be there, who espying this Roague to bee arraigned, was glad, and said nothing vnto hym, but lookt what woulde bee the issue of his appearaunce: at the last hee was brought befoze the Iustices, where hee was examined of his lyfe, and being demaunded what Occupation he was, sayde none, what profession then are you of, and how liue you: Harry quoth he I am a Gentleman and liue of my freendes: Nay that is a lye quoth the poore Shoemaker, vnder correction of the worshipfull of the bench, you haue a trade, and are by your Arte a Conny-catcher: A Conny-catcher, sayd one of the Iustices, and smiled, what is he a warriner fellow: whose warrain doth he keepe canst thou tel: Nay sir, your worship mistaketh me, quoth the Shoemaker, he is not a warrainer but a Conny-catcher: the bench that neuer heard this name befoze smilde, and attributed the name to the mans simplicity, thinking he ment a warrainer: which the Shoemaker espying, made aunswere, that some Connies this fellow catcht, were worth twenty Marke a peece, and for prooffe, quoth hee, I am one of them, and so discoursed the whole order of the Arte, and the basenes of the coosoning: wherupon y^e Iustices looking into his life, appoynted

ted him to be whipt, & the Shoemaker desired hee might gyue him his paiment, which was granted : so whē he came to hys punishment, the Shoemaker laught and said, tis a mad world when pooze Connies are able to beate their Conny-catchers, but he lent him so freendly lashes, that almost hee made him pay an ounce of blood foꝛ every pound of siluer. Thus wee see how the generation of these vipers increase, to the confusion of many honest men, whose practises to my pooze power I haue discovered, and set out with their villainous sleights that they vse to the intrapping of the simple, yet haue they cloakes foꝛ the raine, & shadowes foꝛ their villainies, calling it by the name of Art oꝛ Lawe, as Conny-catching Arte, oꝛ Conny-catching Law. And hereof it riseth, that like as Lawe when the tearm is truely considered, signifieth an ordinaunce of good men establisshed foꝛ the Common wealth, to repressse all vicious liuing, so these Conny-catchers turne the Catte in the panne, giuing to diuers vilde patching Shifts, an honest and godly title, calling it by the name of a Lawe, because by a multitude of hatefull rules (as it were in good learning) they exercise their villanies to the destruction of sundꝛy honest people. Thus and hereupon doe they giue their false conueyance, the name of Conny-catching Law, as there be also other Lawes, as High Law, Sacking Law, Figging Law, Cheting Lawe, Barnards Lawe. If you meruaile at these misteries and quaint words, consider as the Carpenter hath many tearmes familiar enough to his pꝛentises, that others vnderstand not at all, so haue the Conny-catchers not without great cause : foꝛ a falschoode once detected can neuer compassse the desired effect. Therefore wyll I presently acquaint you with the signification of the tearmes in a Table. But leauing them til time & place, comming downe the other day Turnmil Street, I met with one whō I suspected a Conny-catcher, & in deed mist not of my mark: after salutations & some chat, I dꝛew him on to the Tauerne, & there after a cup of wine oꝛ two, I began to treat with him of the maner of his life, & told him I was soꝛy foꝛ his friends sake that he tooke so

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had a course, as to liue vpon the spoyle of pooze men, and especially to deserue the name of Conny-catching, dysswading hym from that base kinde of life, that was so ignominious in the world, and so lothsome in the sight of G D D. But Sir, quoth he, calling mee by my name, as my Religion is small, so my deuotion is lesse, I leaue G D D to be disputed on by Diuines : The two ends I aime at, is gaine and ease, but by what honest meanes I may get, neuer comes within the compasse of my thoughts. Though your experience in trauaile be great, yet in home matters mine is moze, yea, I am sure you are not so ignozant, but you know that few men can liue vprightly, vnlesse hee haue some pretty way (moze then the worlde is witnesse to) to helpe hymselfe withall : Thinke you some Lawyers coulde be such purchasers, if all theyr Pleas were shorthe, and theyr proceedings Justice and conscience ? That Offices woulde bee so deerebought and the buyers so soone enriched, if they counted not pyllage an honest kinde of purchase ? Doe you thinke that men of handy trades, doe make all their commodities without falshood, when so many of them are become daily purchasers ? Nay, what will you moze, who so hath not some sinister way to helpe hymselfe, but followeth hys nose allwaies straight forward, may well holde vp the head for a yeere or two, but the thirde he must needes sinke, and gather the wind into beggers haue. Therefore Sir cease to perswade me to the contrary, for my resolution is to beate my wits, and spare not to busie all my bzaines to saue and helpe me, by what meanes soeuer I care not, so I may auoyd the danger of the Lawe. Wherevppon, seeing thys Conny-catcher resolved in hys forme of lyfe, leauing hym to his lewdnesse, I went my wayes, wondering at the basenes of theyr minds, that would spend theyr time in such detestable sort. But no meruaile, for they are giuen vp into a reprobate sence, and are in religion meere Atheists, as they are in trade flat dissemblers. If I shoulde spend many sheetes in decyphring theyr myfts, it were fruitelous, in that they be many and are full of variety, for every
day

day they inuent newe trickes and such quaint deuises, as are secret and yet passing dangerous, that if a man had Arguseyes, he could scarcely pry into the bottome of their practises. Thus for the benifite of my countrey, I haue briefly discovered the Lawe of Conny-catching, desiring all Iustices, if such coosoners light in their precinct, euen to vse summ Ius against them, because it is the basest of all villanies. And that London Prentises if they chaunce in such Conny-catchers company, may teach them London Lawe, that is, to defend the poore men that are wronged, and learn the Caterpillers the high way to New-gate, where if Hinde fauour them with the heaviest Irons in all the house, & giue them his unkindest entertainment, no doubt his other pettie sinnes shalbe halfe pardoned for his labour. But I would it might bee their fortune to happen into Nobles Northward in white Chappell, there in faith round Robin his Deputie woulde make them (like wretches) feele the waite of his heauiest fetters. And so desiring both honorable and worshipful, as well Iustices as other officers, and all estates from the Prince to the beggar, to rest professed enemies to these base minded Conny-catchers. I take my leaue.

Nascimur pro patria.

A Table of the words of art, vsed in the effecting these
base villanies.

Wherein is discovered the nature of euery terme, beeing
proper to none but to the professors therof.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. High Law. | { Robbing by the high way side. |
| 2. Sacking Law. | { Lechery. |
| 3. Chetung Law. | { Play at false Dice. |
| 4. Cros-biting Law. | { Coosenage by whores. |
| 5. Conny-catching Law. | { Coosenage by Cardes. |
| 6. Tiersing Law. | { Coosenage by false gold. |
| 7. Figging Law. | { Cutting of purses,
and picking of pockets. |
| 8. Barnards Law. | { A drunken coosenage by cards. |

These

The Art of Conny-catching.

These are the eyght Lawes of villanie leading the high way
to infamie.

- In high Law.** { The Theefe is called a High Lawyer,
He that setteth the Watch, a Scripper,
He that standeth to watch, an Oake,
He that is robd, the Martin,
When he yeeldeth, Stouping.
- In Sacking Law.** { The Bawde if it be a woman, a Pandar,
The Bawde if a man, an Apple-squire,
The Whore, a Commodity,
The Whorehouse, a Trugging place,
- In Cheting Law.** { Pardon mee Gentlemen, for although no man could
better then my selfe discouer this Law & his tearmes,
and the name of their Cheates, Bard-dice, Flattes,
Forgers, Langrets, Gourds, Demies, and many o-
thers, with theyr nature, and the crosses and contra-
ries to them vppon aduantage, yet for some speciall
reasons, heerein I will be silent.
- In Crof-biting Law.** { The Whore, the Traffique,
The man that is brought in, the Simpler.
The villaines that take them, the Crof-biters,
- In Conny-catching Law.** { The party that taketh vp the Conny, the Setter,
He that playeth the game, the Verser,
He that is coofened, the Conny,
He that comes in to them, the Barnackle,
The money that is wonne, Purchase.
- In Versing Law.** { He that bringeth him in, the Verser,
The poore Countrey man, the Coofin,
And the drunkard that comes in, the Suffer,
- In Figging Law.** { The Cutte purse, a Nippe,
He that is halfe with him, the Snappe,
The knife, a Cuttle boung,
The picke pocket, a Foist,
He that faceth the man, the Stale,
Taking the Purse, Drawing,
Spying of him, Smoaking,
The Purse, the Bong,
The money, the Shelles,
The Act doing, Striking,
- In Barnards Law.** { He that fetcheth in the man, the Taker,
He that is taken, the Coofin,
The landed man, the Verser,
The drunken man, the Barnard,
And he that makes the Fray, the Rutter.

Cum multis alijs quæ nunc præscribere longum est.

These

7

The Art of Cross-biting.

These quaint tearmes do these base arts vse to shadowe their villanie withall. for, *Multa latent quae non patent*, obscuring their filthie craftes with these faire colours, that the ignorant may not espie what their subtiltie is: but their end will be like their beginning, hatcht with Cain, and consumed with Judas: and so bidding them adue to the deuill, and you farewell to God, I end. And nowe to the arte of Cros-biting.

The Art of Cros-biting.

The Cros-biting law, is a publike proscution of shameles colnage, mixed with incestuous whozedomes, as it was practised in Gomorrah or Sodom, though not after the same vnnaturall maner: for the meihod of their mischieuous art (with blushing cheeks & trembling hart let it be spoken) is, that these vilanous vipers, vnworthie the name of men base rogues (yet why doe I tearme them so well) being outcasts from God, vipers of the world, & an excrementall reuerſion of sin, doth consent, may conſtraine their wiues to yeeld the vse of their bodies to other men, that taking them together, he may cros-bite the partie of all the crownes he presently can make: & that the world may see their monstrous practises, I will briefly set downe the manner.

They haue sundrie praies that they call simplers, which are men fondly and wantonly giuen, whom for a penalty of their lust, they flerce off all y^e enen they haue: some merchants, pzentises, seruingmen, gentlemen, yeomen, farmers, and all degrees, and this is their forme: There are resident in Londoⁿ & the suburbs, certain men attired like Gentlemen, brave fellows, but basely minded, who living in want, as their last refuge, sal vnto this cros-biting law, and to maintain themselves, either marry with some stale whoze, or els forsooth keep one as their friend: & these persons be comonly men of the eight lawes befoze rehearsed either high Lawiers, Clergers, Pips, Conny-catchers, or

D

such

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such of the like fraternitie. These when their other trades fail, as the Cheater, when he hath no cosen to grime with his stop dice, or the high Lawier, when he hath no set match to ride about, and the Ship when there is no terme, faire, nor time of great assemblie, then to maintaine the maine chance, they vse the benefit of their wiuues or friendes, to the cross-biting of such as lust after their filthie enoimities: some simple men are drawn on by subtile meanes, which neuer intended such a bad matter.

In sommer euening, and in the winter nights, these trades (these common trulls (I meane) walke abroad either in the fields or streets, that are commonly hanted, as scales to draw men into hell, and a farre of, as attending applesquires, certaine cross-biters stand aloofe, as if they knew them not: now so many men so many affections. Some burly mates that place their content in lust, letting slip the libertie of their eyes on their painted faces, feede upon their vnchaste beauties, till their hearts be set on fire: then come they to these minions, and court them with many sweet words: alas their loques need no long lutes, so they are forthwith entertained, and either they go to the Tauerne to scale vp the matie, with a pottle of Ioceras, or straight he carries him to some bad place, and there picks his pocket, or else the cross-biters comes swearing in, and so out-face the dismayed companion, that rather then he would be brought in question, he would disburse all that he hath present. But this is but an easie cookmage. Some other meeting with one of that profession in the street, with question if she will drinke with him a pint of wine, their trade is neuer to refuse, and if for manners they doe, it is but once, and then scarce shall they be warme in y^e rume, but in comes a terrible fellow, with a side haire & a fearefull beard, as though he were one of *Poliphemus* cut, and he comes scowling in, and saith, what hast thou to doe base knaue, to carry my sister or my wife to the tauerne: by his clowes you whoze, tis some of your companions, I wil haue
you

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you both before the Justice, Deputy or Constable, to be examined. The poore servingman, apprentice, farmer, or whatsoever he is, seeing such a terrible huffe snuffe, standing with his dagger in his hand, is fearfull both of him, and to be brought in trouble, and therefore speaks kindlie and courteously vnto him, and desires him to be content, he meant no harm. The whoore, that hath feares at command, falls a weeping, and cries him mercy, at this submission of them both, he triumphs like a bragart, and will take no compassion: yet at last, through intreaty of other his companions comming in as strangers, hee is pacified with some forty shillings, and the poore man goes sorrowful away, sighing out that which Salomon hath in his proverbe, *A shameles woman hath honey in her lips, & her throte as sweet as honey, her throte as soft as oyle, but the end of her is more bitter then Aloes, and her tongue is more sharpe then a two edged sword, her feet goe vnto death, and her steppes leade vnto hell.*

Again, these trulls when they haue got in a nouice, then straight they pick his purse, and then haue they their cross-bifers ready, to whom they conuey the money, and so offer themselves to be searcht: but the poore man is so out faced by these cross-biting ruffians, that he is glad to goe away content with his losse, yet are these easy practises. Might the Iustices send out spials in the night, they should see how these street walkers wil let in rich garded gowns, quaint periwigs, ruffs of the largest size, quarter and halfe deep, glozied richly with blew starch, their cheekes died with sorfuling water, & thus are they trickt vp, & either walk like stales vp and down the streets, or els stande like the devils *Siguis* at a fauern or alehouse, as if who should say, if any be so minded to satisfie his filthy lust, to lende me his purse, and the deuill his soule, let him come in and be welcome. Now sir comes by a countrie farmer, walking from his inne to performe some business, & seeing such a gorgeous damzel, he wondering at such a braue wench,

stands

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stands staring her on the face, or perhaps doth but cast a glaunce, & bid her good speed, as plain simple swains haue their lusting humors as wel as others: the trul straight beginning her *exordium* with a smile, saith: how now my friend, what want you, would you speake with any bodie here? If the felow hath any bold spirit, perhaps he wil offer the wine, and then he is caught, tis inough: in he goes and they are chamberd: then sends she for her husband, or her friend, and there either the farmers pocket is stript, or els the cross-biters sal vpon him, and threaten him with bydelwel and the law: then for feare he geues them all in his purse, and makes them some bil to pay a summe of money at a certain day.

If the pooe Farmer be bashful, & passeth by one of these shameles strumpets, then wil she berse it with him, & claim acquaintance of him, and by some policy or other sal aboord on him, & cary him into some house or other: if hee but enter in at dozes with her (thogh the pooe farmer neuer kist her) yet then the cross-biters like vultures, wil pray vpon his purse, and rob him of euery peny. If there be any yong gentlemā that is a nouice and hath not sen their trains, to him wil some common filth (that neuer knew loue,) feigne an ardent and honest affection, til she and hir cross-biters haue berst him to the beggers estate.

Oh gentlemen, marchants, yeomen, and farmers, let this to you al, and to euery degree els, be a caueat to warn you from lust, that your inordinat desire be not a mean to impoverish your purses, discredit your good names, condemn your soules, but also that your welth got with the sweat of your browes, or left by your parents as a patrimony, shalbe a pray to those cosening cross-biters. Some fond men are so far in with these detestable frogs, that they consume what they haue vpon them, and find nothing but a *neapolean* fauour for their labor. Read the vii. of *Salomons proverbs*, and there at large be to the description of a shameles and impudent curtizan: yet is there another kind of cross-biting

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biting which is most pestilent, and thats this. Ther liues about this town certain householders, yet more chifreys and coseners, who learning some insight in the ciuil lawe, walke abroad like paratores, sumners, and infozmers, being none at al either in office or credit, and they go spieng about where any marchant, or marchants pzentise, citizen, welthy farmer, or other of good credit, ether accompanie with any woman familiarly, or els hath gotten some mayd with child, as mens natures be prone to sin, straight they come ouer his fallowes thus, they sende for him to a tauern, and there open the matter vnto him, which they haue cunningly learned out, telling him he must be presented to the Arches, and the scitation shalbe peremptorie lie serued in his parish church. The partie afraid to haue his credit crackt with the worshipful of the citie, and the rest of his neighbors, and grieuing highly his wife should heare of it, straight takes composition with this cosener for some xx. marke, nay I heard of lx. pound cross-bitten at one time, and then the cosening infozmer or cross-biter promisseth to wipe him out of the court, and discharge him from the matter, when it was neither known nor presented: so go they to the woman, and fetch her off if she be married, and though they haue this grosse summe, yet oft times they cross-bite her for more: nay thus doe they seare cittizens, pzentices and farmers, that they finde but anie way suspicious of the like fault. These cross-biting bands, for no better I can terme them, in that for lucre they conceale the sinne, and smother by lust, doe not onely enrich themselves mightely thereby, but also discredite, hinder, and preiudice the Courte of the Arches, and the Officers belonging to the same. There are some pozeblinde patches of that facultie, that haue their Tenements, purchased, and their plate on their boord very solemnly, who onely get this gaines by cross-biting, as is afoze reherced. But leaving them to the deep insight of such as be appointed with iustice to correct vice, again to the crue of my for-

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mer cros-biters, whose fee simple to line vpon, is nothing but the folowing of common, dishonest and idle truls, and therby maintain themselves bzaue, and the strumpets in handsom furniture. And to end this art with an English demonstration, ile tel you a pzetie tale of late perfozmd in bishopsgate street: there was there siue trafficques pzetie, but common huswiues, that stood fast by a tauern doze, looking if some pray would passe by for their purpose, among the eldest of them, and most experienced in that law, named *M. B.* spied a master of a ship comming along: here is a simpler quoth she, Ile verse him, or hang me. Sir, said she, god euen, what are you so liberal as to bestow on thze good wenches that are dzy, a pint of wine, In faith, sayze women, qd. he, I was neuer nigard for so much, and with that he takes one of them by the hand, and caries them all into the tauern, there he bestowed cheare and ipocras vpon them, dzinking hard til the shot came to a noble, so that they iii. carousing to the gentleman, made him somewhat tipsie, & then *Et venus in vinis, ignis in igne fuit.* Wel, night grew on, and hee would away, but this mistres *M. B.* stopt his iozney thus, gentleman, qd. she, this undeserued fauor of yours makes vs so deeply beholding to you, that our ability is not able any way to make sufficient satisfaction, yet to shew vs kind in what we can, you shal not deny me this request, to see my simple house befoze you go. The gentleman a litle whittled, consented and went with them, so the shot was paid, & away they go: Without the tauern doze stood two of their husbands, *I. B.* and *J. K.* and they were made priuy to the practise. Home goes the gentleman with these iolly huswiues stumbling, & at last he was welcom to *M. B.* house, and one of the thze went into a chamber, and got to bed, whose name was *A. B.* after they had chatted a while, the gentleman would have been gone, but she told him that befoze he went, he should see all the roomes of her house, and so ledde him vp into the chamber where the party lay in bed: who is here said the
Gen.

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Gentleman. Marie saith Hal, a good pretie wench sir, and if you be not wel, lie downe by her, you can take no harm of her: dzonkennes desires lust, and so the Gentleman begins to dally, and a waie goes she with the candle, and at last he put off his clothes and went to bed: yet he was not so dzonke, but he could after a while remember his mony, and feeling for his purse all was gone, and threelinkes of his whistle broken off: the sum that was in his purse was in gold and siluer twentie nobles. And thus he was in a maze, though his head were well laden, in comes I. B. the good man of the house, and two other with him, and speaking somwhat loud, peace husband quoth she, there is one in bed, speak not so loud. In bed, saith he, gogs nowns Ile go see, and so will I saith the other: you shall not saith his wife, and stroue against him, but vp goes he and his cross-biters with him, & seeing the Gentleman in bed, out with his dagger, and asked what base vilaine it was that there sought to dishonest his wife: well, he sent one of them for a constable, and made the gentleman rise, who half dzunk yet had that remembrance to speake faire, and to intreate him to keepe his credit: but no intreatie could serue, but to the counter he must, and the constable must be sent for: yet at last one of the intreated that the gentleman might be honestly bled, and carried to a Tauerne to talke of the matter, till a Constable came. Tut, saith I. B. I will haue law vpon him. But the base cross-biter at last stoopt, and to the Tauerne they goe, where the Gentleman laide his whistle to pawne for monie, and there bestowed as much of them as came to ten shillings, and sate dzinking and talking untill the next morrow. By that the Gentleman had stolne a nap, and waking, it was day light, and then seeing himselfe compassed with these cross-biters, and remembering his nights worke, soberly smiling, asked the if they knew what he was: they answered, not wel. Why then, quoth he, you base cosning rogues, you shall ere wee part: and with that drawing his sword, kept the into the chamber, desiring that the constable might be sent for: but

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this bzaue of his coulde not dismaie *M. Mall*, for thee had
bidden a sharper brunt befoze, & itnes the time of hir mar-
tirdome, whē vpon her shoulders was ingrauen, the histo-
rie of her whorish qualities. but she replying swoze, seeing
he was so lustie, her husband shoulde not put it vp by no
meanes. I will tell thee thou base cros-biting baud, quoth
he, and you coosning companions, I serue a noble man, &
for my credit with him. I refer me to the pena'tie he will
impose on you, for by God I will make you an example to
all cros-biters ere I end with you. I tell you villaines, I
serue, and with that he namde his Lord. When the guilty
whores and cosners heard of his credit and seruice, they
began humbly to intreat him to be good to the: then quoth
he, first deliuer me my monie, they vpon that gladly gaue
him all, and restozed the linkes of his chaine. When hee
had all, he smiled, and sware afresh, that he would torment
them for all this, that the seueritie of their punishment
might be a caueat to others to beware of the like coos-
nage: and vpon that knockt with his foote, and sayd hee
would let them go till he had a Constable. When in gene-
rall they humbled themselves, and so recompenced the par-
tie, that he agreed to passe ouer the matter, conditionally
beside, that they would paie the sixtene Shillings hee had
spent in charges, which they also perfozmed. The Gens-
tleman slept his wate & said, you may see the old prouerbe
fulfilled, *Fallere fallentem non est frans*, but the poore crosbi-
ters sate sighing a sorrowfull heigh bo. Thus haue I de-
cyphered an odious practise not wortie to be named: and
now wishing all of what estate soeuer, to beware of althg
lust, and such damnable stales as draues men on to dis-
ordinate desires, and rather to spend their coine amongst
honest companie, then to bequeath it to such base cros-bi-
ters, as prae vpon men, like rauens vpon dead carcasses,
I end with this prater, that Cros-biting and Conny-cat-
ching may be as little known in England, as the eating
of swines flesh was amongst the Iewes. Farewell.

Nascimur pro patria.

FINIS.

A PLEASANT DISCOVERY OF
the Coofenage of Colliers.

ALthough (courteous Reader,) I did not put in amongst the lawes of cosening, the law of *legering*, which is a deceit that Colliers abuse the common-welth withall, in hauing vnlawfull sackes, yet take it for a pettie kinde of craft or mysterie, as preiudiciall to the poore, as any of the other two: for I omitted diuers other diuelish vices, as, the nature of the *Lift*, the *Black art*, & the *Curbing law*, which is the Filchers & theeues that come into houses or shops, and lift away any thing; or pick-locks, or hookers at windowes, although they be as *species* and branches to the table before rehearsed. But omitting them, again to our law of *legering*. Know therfore, that there be inhabiting in and about *London*, certain caterpillers (colliers I should say) that doe terme themselves (amongst themselves) by the name of *legers*, who for that the honorable, the L. Maior of the citie of *London*, and his officers, look straitly to the measuring of coales, doe (to preuent the execution of his iustice) plant themselves in & about the suburbs of *London*, as *Shorditch*, *White-chappell*, *Southwarke*, and such places, and there they haue a house, or yard, that hath a back gate, because it is the more conuenient for their cosening purpose, and the reason is this; the *leger*, the crafty collier I meane, riseth very earlie in the morning, and either goeth towards *Croyden*, *Whetstone*, *Greenwitch*, or *Romford*, and there meteth with cuntry colliers, who bring coles to serue the markette: there, in a forestalling manner, this *leger* bargaineth
E with.

A Plaine Discouerie

with the cuntry Collier for his coales, and payeth for them nineteene shillings, or twentie at the most, but commonly fifteene and sixteene, and there is in the load 36. sakes: so that they paie for euerie couple about 14. pence. Now hauing bought his coales, euerie sacke containing full foure bushels: he carieth the Country Collier home to his legering place, and there at the backe gate causeth him to vnload, and as they saie, shoote the coales downe. As soone as the cuntry Collier hath dispacht and is gone, then the Legier who hath three or four hired men vnder him bringeth forth his owne sakes, which be long & narrow, holding at the most not three bushells, so that they gaine in the change of euerie sacke a bushel for their pains. Tush, yet this were somewhat to be borne withall, although the gaine & vsurie is monstrous, but this sufficeth not, for they fil not these sacks ful by far, but put into them some 2. bushels & a halfe, laying in the mouth of the sacke certaine great choice coales, which they call fillers, to make the sack shew faire, although al the rest be smal willow coale, & halfe dros. When they haue thus not filled their sacks, but thrust coales into the, that which they lay vppermost is best filled, for to make the greater shew: then a tall sturdy knaue that is al ragd, & durty on his legs, as thogh he came out of the coutry (for they durtie their hose & shoos vpon purpose to make themselues seem cuntry colliers:) Thus with two sacks a pece, they either go out at the back gate, or steale out at the street side, and so go vp and downe the suburbs, and sell theyr coales in summer for 14. & 16. pence a couple, and in winter for 18. or 20. The poore cookes and other citizens that buy them, thinke they be cuntry colliers that

of the coofnage of Colliers.

that haue left some coals of their load, & would gladly haue monie, supposing (as the Statute is) they bee good and lawfull sackes, are thus cooined by the Leggers, and haue but two bushells and a halfe for foure bushells, & yet are extreemly rackt in the price, which is not onely a great hinderance to her Maiesties poore commons, but greatly preiudiciall to the master colliers, that bring true sackes & measure out of the cuntry. Then consider (gentle readers) what a kinde of coofnage these leggers vse, that can make of 30. sackes some 56. which I haue seene with mine eies, for I haue set downe with my pen how many turnes they haue made of a load, and they made 28. turnes, euerie turne being two sacks: so that they haue gotten an intollerable gains by their false measure. I could not be silent seeing this abuse, but thoght to reueale it for my countrys commoditie, and to giue light to the worshipfull Iustices, and other her Maiesties officers in Middlesex, Surrey, & els where, to looke to such a grosse coofnage, as contrarie to a direct statute, doth defraud, and impouerish her Maiesties poore commons. Well may the honorable and worshipfull of London flourish, who carefully looke to the country coales, and if they finde not foure bushells in euerie sacke, do sell them to the poore as forfeit, and distribute the monie to them that haue need, burning the sacke, and honoring or rather dishonoring the pillorie with the colliers durty faces: & well may the honorable & worshipful of the suburbs liue & prosper, if they looke in iustice to these leggers, who deserue more punishment then the statute appoints for them which is whipping at a carts tail, or with fauour the pillorie.

A plaine Discoverie

For fewell or fiering being a thing necessarie in a cō-mon-welth, and charcole vsed more then any other, the poore, not able to buy by the load, are faine to get in their fire by the sack, and so are greatly cosened by the retaile. Seeing therefore the carefull lawes her Maiesty hath appointed for the wealth of her Commons, and succor of the poore, I would humbly entreat all her Maiesties officers, to look into the life of these *legers*, and to root them out, that the poor feele not the burden of their inconscionable gaines. I herd with my cares a poor woman of *Shorditch* who had bought coles of a *leger*, with weping teares cōplaine and rayle against him in the street, in her rough eloquence calling him cosening knaue, & saying, tis no maruel villain (quoth she) if men compare you colliers to the deuil, seeing your consciences are worser then the deuils; for hee takes none but those soules whom God hates: and you vndoe the poore whom God loues.

What is the matter good wife (quoth I) that you vse such inuēctiue words against the collier: a collier sir (sath she) hee is a theefe, and a robber of the common people. Ile tell you sir, I bought of a countrey collier two sacks for thirteen pence, and I bought of this knaue three sacks which cost me two & twentie pence: and sir, when I measured both their sackes, I had more in the two sacks by three pecks, then I had in his three. I would (quoth she) the Iustices would looke into this abuse, and that my neighbors would ioine with me in a supplication, & by God I would kneele before the Queene, & entreat that such cose-nig colliers might not onely be punished with the
bare

of the cosenage of Colliers.

bare pillerie, (for they haue such black faces, that no man knowes them againe, and so are they carelesse,) but that they might leaue their cares behinde them for a forfet: and if that would not mende them, that *Bull* with a faire halter might roote them out of the world, that liue in the world by such grosse & dishonest colenage. The collier hearing this, went smiling away, because he knew his life was not lookt into. & the womā wept for anger that she had not some one by, that might with iustice reuenge her quarrel.

There be also certaine colliers that bring coles to *London* by water in barges, and they be called *griper*s; to these comes the *leger* and bargaines with him for his coles, and sels by retayl with the like cosenage of sacks as I rehearsed before. But these mad *legers* (not content with this monstrous gaine) do besides mixe among their other sacks of coles, store of shruffe dust and small cole, to their great aduantage.

And for prooffe hereof I will recite you a matter of trueth, lately performed by a Cookes wife vpon a cosening collier.

How a Cookes wife in London did lately serue a Collier for his cosenage.

IT chanced this summer that a loade of coles came forth of *Kent* to *Bilingsgate*, and a *leger* bought the, who thinking to deceiue the Citizens, as he did those in the Suburbs, furnisht himself with a couple of sacks, and comes vp *S. Mary hill* to sel the: a cookes wife bargained with the collier for his coles, and they agreed vpon fourteen pence for the couple: which done, he caried in the coles, & shot them: and when

A plaine Discoverie

the wife saw them, and perceiuing there was scarce
fue bushels for eight, she calls a little girle to her, and
bade her go for the Constable: for thou coofening
rogue, quoth shee, (speaking to the Collier) I will
teach thee how thou shalt cosen me with thy false
sacks, whatsoeuer thou doest to others, and I will
haue thee before my L. Mayor, with that she caught
a spit in her hand, and swore if he offered to stir, shee
would therewith broach him: at which worde the
collier was amazed, and the feare of the pillerie put
him in such a fright, that he said he would goe to his
bote, and returne againe to answer whatsoeuer shee
durst obiekt against him, & for pledge therof (quoth
the collier) keep my sacks, your mony, and the coles
also. Whereupon the woman let him go: but as
soon as the collier was out of dores, it was needlesse
to bid him run, for down he gets to his bote, & away
he thrusts from Billingsgate, and so immediatly went
down to Wapping, and neuer after durst returne to
the Cookes wife to demaund either mony, sacks, or
coales.

*How a flax wife and her neighbors rused a
coofening Collier.*

Now Gentlemen by your leaue, and heare a mery iest:
There was in the Suburbs of London, a Flax-wife,
that wanted coles, and seeing a leger come by with
a couple of sacks, that had before deceiued her in like sorte,
cheperd, bargained and bought them, and so went in with her
to shoot them in her colehouse. As soone as she saw her coles,
she easilie gest there was scarce six bushelles, yet dissembling
the matter, she paid him for the, & bad him bring her two
sacks

of the cosenage of Colliars.

sacks more: the collier went his way, and in the meane time the flax-wife measured the coles, and there was iust fve bushels and a peck. Hereupon she cald in her neighbors, being a companie of women that before time had also been pincht in their coles, and shewed them the cosenage, & desired their aide to her in tormenting the colliar, which they promist to perform, and thus it fell out. Se conueyd them into a back room (some xvi. of the) euery one hauing a good cudgell vnder her apron, straight comes the colliar and saith, Mistres, here be your coles: welcome good colliar, quoth she, I pray thee follow me into the backside, and shute them in another room. The colliar was content, & went with hir, but as soon as he was in, the goodwife lockt the dore. & the colliar seying such a troupe of wiues in the room, was amaz'd, yet said, God speed you all shrewes, welcome quoth one iolly Dame, being appointed by them all to giue sentence against him: who so soon as the colliar had shot his sacks, said, sirra colliar, know that we are here all assembled as a grand Iury, to determine of thy villanies, for selling vs false sacks of coles, and know that thou art here indited vpon cosenage, therefore hold vp thy hand at the bar, and cyther say, guilty, or not guilty, and by whom thou wilt be tryed, for thou must receiue condign punishment for the same ere thou depart. The colliar who thought they had but iested, smiled & said, Come on, which of you all shall be my Iudge. Marry sir, quoth one iolly dame, that is I, and by God you knaue, you shall find I will pronouce sentence against you seuerely if you be found guilty. Whē the Colliar saw they were in earnest, he said, Come, come, open the dore and let me go, with that fve or six wiues started vp and fell vpon the Colliar, and gaue vnto him halfe a score of sound lambekes with their cudgels, and bad him speak more reuerently to their Principall.

The

A plaine Dilcouerie.

The collier feeling it smart, was afraid, and thought mirth & curtesie would be the best mean to make amendes for his villany, & therfore said he would be tried by the verdict of the smock. Vpon this they panneld a iury, and the flax-wife gaue euidence; and because this vnaccustomed iury requir'd witnes, she measured the coles before the colliers face, vppon which he was found guilty, & she that sat as principal to giue iudgement vpon him, began as followeth.

Collier, thou art condemned here by proosse, of flat cose-nage, and I am now appointed in conscience to geue sentence against thee, being not only moued therunto because of this poor woman, but also for the general commodity of my country, and therfore this is my sentence: we haue no pillery for thee, nor cart to whip thee at, but here I do award that thou shalt haue as many bastinados as thy bones wil beare, and then to be turned out of dores without sacks or mony. This sentence being prouounced, she rose vp, and gaue no respite of time for th'xecution, but according to the sentence before expressed, al the womē fell vpon him, beating him extremely, among whom he lent some lusty buffets. But might ouercoms right, and therfore Ne Hercules contra duos. The women so crusht him, that he was not able to lift his hands to his head, & so with a broken pate or two, he was paid, and like iack Drum, faire and orderly thrust out of dores.

This was the reward that the Colliar had, and I pray God all such colliars be so serued, and that good wiues when they buy such sacks, may giue them such payments, and that the honorable and worshipfull of the land, may look into this gros abuse of Colliars, as well for charity sake, as also for the benefit of the poor: and so wishing Colliars to amend their deceitfull and disordred dealings herein, I end.

FINIS.

